

News Release

U.S. Senators Pete Domenici & Jeff Bingaman

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N.M. SENATORS ASK COLLEAGUES TO JOIN "GREEN RIBBON" SHOW OF SUPPORT FOR FIRE VICTIMS & RECOVERY EFFORT

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senators Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman today announced that they have asked their colleagues to wear green ribbons this Tuesday in solidarity with New Mexicans paying tribute to those who are fighting to bring disastrous forest fires under control.

In response to the tragic Cerro Grande Fire in New Mexico, KRSN, the local radio station in Los Alamos, kicked off a Green Ribbon Campaign to demonstrate appreciation to the emergency personnel and firefighters who battled the blaze by wearing green ribbons on their lapel.

The New Mexico senators have asked their colleagues to join the campaign, and expanded the meaning to pay tribute to those who have battled a high number of fires throughout the states, as well as other forest and wildfires around the nation.

"We encourage you to join us in supporting the heroic efforts of firefighters, emergency personnel and everyday citizens across the state of New Mexico and in other states by wearing the enclosed green ribbon," Domenici and Bingaman wrote each of their Senate colleagues. "It is truly miraculous that the loss of life and injury has been minimal as thousands of people from across the country are fighting forest and wildfires. So many individuals have played a role in saving Los Alamos National Laboratories, as well as saving towns and bringing the fires under control."

"As you know, New Mexico has suffered a great tragedy over the past few weeks. Several forest fires have burned tens of thousands of acres in both the northern and southern part of our state. In some of the hardest hit areas, hundreds of homes were burned to the ground. Because of severe drought conditions around the country, this could continue to be a disastrous fire season for the nation," they wrote.

The New Mexico congressional delegation, in cooperation with the Clinton administration, is currently working to draft legislation outlining a federal compensation program for victims of the Cerro Grande Fire. Last Thursday, White House Chief of Staff John Podesta and Jack Lew, director of the Office of Management and Budget, briefed the New Mexico senators and agreed to work with the delegation on a package of aid to compensate people for direct losses caused by fire.

